



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

JAN 21 1992

Joseph J. Holonich, Director
Repository Licensing and Quality
Assurance Project Directorate
Division of Nuclear Material
Safety and Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Holonich:

Enclosed are two copies of the reports prepared by an external review panel which was tasked by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) with evaluating the concepts, data, and interpretations presented by Jerry Szymanski in his report of July 26, 1989. The external review panel produced two reports reflecting majority and minority viewpoints: (1) External Review Panel Majority Report, and (2) Minority Report of the Special DOE Review Panel. These reports have not yet been officially reviewed by DOE.

A 17-member panel of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) is also focusing on the topic of coupled processes as they might affect a high-level nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The NAS report is expected to be released early this year.

The DOE will carefully consider the external review panel reports and NAS report prior to implementing any necessary modifications to the site characterization program.

If you have any questions, contact Chris Einberg at (202) 586-8869 or FTS 896-8869.

Sincerely,

John P. Roberts
Acting Associate Director for
Systems and Compliance
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management

Enclosures: *all enclosed on stuff*

1. External Review Panel
Majority Report
2. Minority Report of
Special DOE Review Panel

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PDR WASTE
WM-11 PDR

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NH03*

cc w/o encl:

C. Gertz, YMPO
R. Loux, State of Nevada
K. Whipple, Lincoln County, NV
M. Baughman, Lincoln County, NV
J. Bingham, Clark County, NV
D. Bechtel, Clark County, NV
S. Bradhurst, Nye County, NV
B. Raper, Nye County, NV
P. Niedzielski-Eichner, Nye County, NV
R. Campbell, Inyo County, CA
G. Derby, Lander County, NV
P. Goicoechea, Eureka, NV
C. Schank, Churchill County, NV
C. Jackson, Mineral County, NV
F. Sperry, White Pine County, NV
L. Vaughan, Esmeralda County, NV
K. Hooks, NRC

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09/03/1991

Mr. Carl Gertz
Project Manager
Yucca Mountain Project
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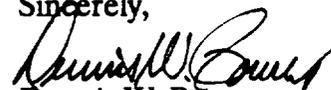
Dear Mr. Gertz:

I am forwarding through Bill Sublette the final report of the majority group for the external review panel.

The minority report is not complete yet; from talking with Charles Archambeau, it would appear their report will be completed soon (perhaps a week or two). Though we realize our majority report will be a public report as soon as received, we suggest that it not be given wide distribution until the minority report is also available.

I will send a further letter concerning the panel activities when the minority report is available.

Sincerely,


Dennis W. Powers
Chairman
External Review Panel

copy to: panel members